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Proposed Plan Looking Toward Adjustments In the Agriculture Of Illinois

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An address delivered before a conference of Farm Advisers, Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and Advisory Committees of the College of Agriculture and Agricultural Experiment Station, during the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the American Country Life Association, Urbana, Ill., June 20, 1928, by H. W. Mumford, Dean and Director, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station, and Agricultural Extension Service, University of Illinois.

The Need for Agricultural Adjustments

Much has been written, and more said, concerning the desirability of adjusting our agricultural practices to changing economic and social conditions. Those of us who are working with farm problems realize that agricultural adjustments are constantly being made, as a result of forces both within and without the industry, and that, speaking generally, farm practices over a series of years become adapted to local and general conditions. When, however, adjustments are left to take their "normal" course, they come but slowly—there is a lag that results in loss and hardship, which might in large measure be avoided by more foresight and by organized effort.

May I here refer to three statements on this subject which I made in a paper read during Farmers' Week a year ago last winter:¹

"More satisfactory ways must be found to anticipate the economic need for changes, both in kind and in quantity, in agricultural production. The reasons for such changes must be so clear that farmers will feel a justifiable confidence in adopting them, for unless and until this is done there will be a very proper reluctance about making changes.

"There is no doubt but that we need to find some way to adjust our productive efficiency and activity to demand. Our production policies must be more sensitive to changes in demand for food-stuffs, whether these are due to changes in population, or in obvious needs, or to the eccentricities of appetite.

"There is need for the redirection of the use of marginal lands and the utilization of the labor of marginal farmers."

Improved transportation facilities by road, rail, and water, and improved means of communication, bringing to the farm home the marketing news of the day and the possibility of the farmer selling his specialized product in a market very remote from his farm, complicate rather than simplify the difficulties of determining in what direction adjustments should be made.

It has ceased to be a novel experience to find displayed in our local groceries out-of-season products shipped in from distant states or in some instances from foreign countries. Indeed this has become the common experience, and it is a fact which intimately

¹January 17, 1927.

concerns our own farm adjustments. A simple example will illustrate this point In a Champaign grocery store recently the attention of a customer was called to some attractive southern Illinois strawberries. The woman was told that it was the first shipment of Illinois berries that had come in and that they were very nice; would she not like to have some? Her reply was, "Oh, no," that she and her family were "sick of strawberries." This meant, of course, that the community had been buying in the local market out-of-season berries produced in Louisiana, Kentucky, and other southern states, so that when the local crop was ready for market there was no local demand, and these berries in turn had to be shipped to some other state where they could be consumed as "out-of-season" fruit.

All this but serves to indicate that there no longer is a "local situation" which can be considered without reference to what is happening elsewhere.

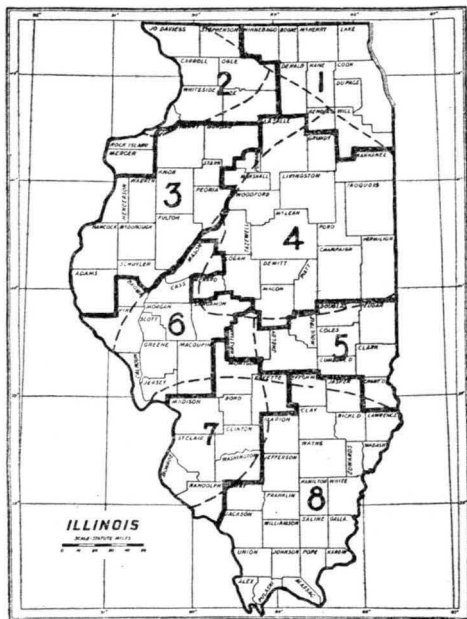
Responsibility of the College

The College recognizes its responsibility for initiating and for cooperating in the carrying out of plans and programs looking to agricultural progress in Illinois. The proposals set down in the present paper are all designated to contribute something toward the achievement of these ends. Obviously, this is not an easy task. It is recognized that some missteps are likely to be made before the best methods can be worked out. For some of the problems the solutions are not yet in sight.

The fact that previous attempts at formulating agricultural programs and policies have been disappointing alike to those formulating them and to those attempting to put them into practice is no argument against their need; it is rather evidence of the difficulties involved and of the fact that no adequate methods have yet been devised to meet them. Most attempts have lacked completeness and, speaking generally, there has been failure to set in motion adequate mechanism for accomplishing their aims, and the results from such efforts as a consequence have been disappointing. Each serious attempt, however, has contributed a suggestion or a method to be either followed up or abandoned in subsequent programs, and if our efforts now should fail to accomplish all that might be hoped, we can at least be reasonably certain of making some valuable contributions by demonstrating wherein such attempts are likely to fail and wherein they may be expected to succeed.

Farming-Type Areas the Logical Units for Consideration

For many years the Extension Service of the College has been advocating the desirability of programs of work for each of the organized counties of the state. Where these programs have been wisely selected and vigorously promoted, many desirable farm adjustments have been brought about. These so-called programs of



work, however, have been in the nature of a combination of subject-matter projects, very properly constituting a part of an agricultural program for a county but falling short of anything like a comprehensive program for the agriculture of a region.

The time has arrived when we should take a forward step by attempting to formulate, as rapidly as a background of facts can be accumulated, agricultural programs for the various farming-type areas of the state. To attempt to approach a subject of such far-reaching importance with the community or even the county as a unit would result in disappointment, for farming has long since passed the time when its main interest is to supply the needs of the farm family, the community, or the county.

Several years of study and analysis by the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois have developed certain facts with respect to the areas in Illinois over which rather definite types of farming predominate. Factors of soil and climate are mainly responsible for the development of the differences in these areas, tho certain external factors, such as transportation facilities, labor supply, population centers, and competition with other areas, have had a marked influence also. While practically all types and systems of farming are to be found in every area, nevertheless certain rather definite differences exist between areas, growing out of fundamental physical and economic differences, as above suggested, and these must be recognized in the formulation of any plans for agricultural development.

The following outline and the accompanying map indicate in a general way the location of these farming-type areas, eight in number, and the counties included in each:

1. Dairying

Boone	DuPage	Lake	Winnebago
Cook	Kane	McHenry	
DeKalb	Kendall	Will	

2. Mixed Livestock

Carroll	Lee	Ogle	Stephenson
JoDaviess	Mercer	Rock Island	Whiteside

3. Beef Cattle and Hogs

Adams	Hancock	Knox	Schuyler
Bureau	Henderson	McDonough	Stark
Fulton	Henry	Peoria	Warren

4. Grain Farming

Champaign	Kankakee	Marshall	Tazewell
DeWitt	LaSalle	McLean	Vermilion
Ford	Livingston	Menard	Woodford
Grundy	Logan	Piatt	
Iroquois	Macon	Putnam	

5. General Farming (Corn)

Christian	Crawford	Douglas	Moultrie
Clark	Cumberland	Edgar	Shelby
Coles			

6. General Farming (Wheat and Corn)

Brown	Greene	Mason	Sangamon
Calhoun	Jersey	Morgan	Scott
Cass	Macoupin	Pike	

7. Wheat and Dairying

Bond	Madison	Montgomery	St. Clair
Clinton	Monroe	Randolph	Washington
Fayette			

8. Mixed Farming

Alexander	Hardin	Marion	Saline
Clay	Jackson	Massac	Union
Edwards	Jasper	Perry	Wabash
Effingham	Jefferson	Pope	Wayne
Franklin	Johnson	Pulaski	White
Gallatin	Lawrence	Richland	Williamson
Hamilton			

What the College Proposes to Do

Here is what the College of Agriculture proposes to do as rapidly as its funds and personnel can accomplish the task:

1. Review all available information such as Census data, soil survey reports, the results of various soil, crop, vegetable, and fruit tests made on experimental fields in various parts of the state, and the reports of the farm-accounting project, having a direct or an indirect bearing upon the question of farm adjustments in the various areas of the state.

2. Analyze the problem, and by experience and contact in the various conferences herein proposed, as well as by the assembling of data at the College, determine what additional facts are needed to supplement those already at hand.

3. Make such additional studies of farm systems and practices within the various areas as are needed to give an even more intimate understanding of their agriculture,—in short, to supplement what is already known with what is lacking.

4. Hold a series of conferences in the farming-type areas. The College, having assembled as much statistical and other data as possible before October 1 next, will hold at the most favorable time, presumably during the month of October, a series of conferences, one in each of the eight farming-type areas. Representative farmers, teachers of vocational agriculture, and perhaps others from each of the various counties in the area will be asked to participate with members of the staff of the College and the farm and home advisers in these conferences. Later, another series of conferences will be held in connection with the Outlook Report, as suggested on pages 11 and 12.

Suggested Committees for Conferences in Farming-Type Areas

According to present tentative plans, the conferences to be held in the farming-type areas will be organized into committees along commodity and subject-matter lines, with additional committees recognizing the social aspects of the problem, or community development, and questions surrounding the development of the farm home. Following is an outline of the suggested committees¹ for each farming-type area:

1. Field crops
 - Feed
 - Cash
2. Meat animals
 - Beef cattle
 - Hogs
 - Sheep
3. Poultry
4. Dairying
5. Horticulture
 - Fruit
 - Vegetables
6. Farm organization and management
7. Mechanical equipment, drainage, and farm buildings
8. Agricultural cooperation
9. Community development
10. Development of the farm home

First Objectives

The first objectives to be considered in laying plans for regional agricultural adjustments are tentatively suggested by the following outline:

1. Determine what combinations of crops and animal enterprises will yield the greatest returns from land, labor, and capital, under the existing geographical and probable near-future economic conditions.
2. Ascertain the causes for existing farm practices.

¹It is assumed that each of the committees dealing with commodities will consider the pertinent marketing aspects of the commodity as well as production.

3. Determine the handicaps which the farming of an area suffers because of competition for labor with non-agricultural industries, unfavorable transportation facilities, burden of taxation, etc., and how these may be overcome.

4. Determine what specific changes in production methods would profitably increase the returns of an area.

5. Determine the most effective procedure for bringing about the best utilization of land for crops, pastures, and forests.

6. Determine whether or not the marketing facilities and methods are adequate.

Type of Information Needed

The foregoing objectives have been set down without reference to whether the College is at present able to furnish the data to attain them or must supplement what facts it has thru further studies. To attempt to outline at this time all the essential lines of information that will have to be followed up in order to attain them would be difficult, if not futile, but it is possible to give an indication of the general character of the inquiries by some examples:

The matter of land utilization. It is possible to show fairly definitely what the trends have been in the use of land in the various parts of Illinois for the past sixty years, and to relate the shifts that have taken place to the conditions that induced them. This applies to the use of land for feed crops, cash crops, pasture, woodland, and other purposes. The recent substitution of motor for horse power in cities, and to a less extent on farms, means the substitution of mineral fuels for horse feeds. What are all the facts surrounding the position of the feed crops, both as produced for use on the farms where they are grown and as produced for sale for feeding on other farms, or for use otherwise than on farms?

Here is a series of problems of the first magnitude leading naturally and promptly into the whole question of trends in and opportunities for industrial as well as food uses for such crops, better organization of farms for the production of such crops or of substitutes for them, the more economical marketing of such products, and a large number of other questions.

The proper adjustment of field crops. This problem calls for consideration, not only of local situations, but of country-wide and world-wide conditions as well. Data are needed showing:

1. Long-time and short-time trends for the various crops in acreage, production, yield per acre, and prices, on the basis of the world as a whole, the United States, and in some cases the principal competing countries, the state, and the farming-type area.
2. Outlets for the product for feeding and manufacturing purposes.
3. Possibility of the development of new markets as well as new areas of competition.
4. Complementary relationships between crops.
5. Factors affecting prices.

Determining the place of specialized crops. In attempting to determine the place of a specialized crop, such as a fruit crop like peaches, in the agriculture of a region, data are needed covering:

1. The volume of production in Illinois and in the United States thru a series of years.
2. The average price each year for the same years.
3. The cost of producing peaches in Illinois and in competing states.
4. The number of carlot shipments from Illinois and from competing regions by weekly periods, over a series of years.
5. The capacity of Illinois markets for Illinois peaches.
6. Freight rates on peaches from Illinois producing points to logical markets.
7. A peach tree census in Illinois by counties for 1910, 1920, and 1925 (including trees both of bearing and of non-bearing age).
8. A record by counties of production thru a series of years.
9. Temperature data in the respective parts of the state for the same period.

Dairy farming. Any substantial improvement in the dairy situation must be based on the ascertainable facts pertaining to production and distribution, namely:

1. The productive capacity of a region, ascertained from a survey of the number of animals in the region and the production per animal.
2. The number and type of transportation facilities, and in a general way the cost of transporting milk from farm to market.
3. The available markets. A study of these would enable producers to adapt their systems of production to market demand.
4. Costs and margins of profit. Information on these points would enable producers to ascertain whether or not present marketing agencies for their region are adequate and satisfactory, or whether they should market their product thru cooperative associations.
5. The relation between the local situation and state, interstate, national, and international aspects of the industry.

Farm organization. The information, part of which is already available, which should be brought together as a basis for determining desirable points of farm organization, includes:

1. Facts that will give a true cross-section picture of agricultural conditions in the different farming-type areas.

2. The influence of different types of farm organization on farm earnings, as revealed by records from many farms continued thru a series of years.

3. The causes for the development of the different farming-type areas in the state, together with factors that may be causing changes at the present time.

4. Relative costs and physical requirements of different crops and livestock enterprises.

5. Profitableness of different kinds of crops and livestock enterprises, as influenced by current prices and trends in prices.

6. The influence of the frequent introduction of new enterprises or new practices on current farm costs.

It is clear that a large number of facts must be scientifically ascertained and organized before the necessary information can be developed in a form in which it can be applied to the various agricultural divisions and subdivisions of the state.

Much Information Already Available

There is a general tendency to underestimate the amount of information concerning production and marketing that is already available for the various sections of Illinois. It takes such a call as that to which most of the state Colleges of Agriculture responded a year ago, sent out by a special committee of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities for information on the agricultural situation, to make clear how abundant are some of these lines of information possessed by an institution such as our own as well as by other agencies of state and nation.

However, in spite of the wealth of information already in the hands of the College and Experiment Station, it is freely admitted that well-directed committee studies, conducted on the basis of intimate and exact knowledge both of local and of the more general facts as to the production and marketing of farm products, will reveal the need for more information than the College is at present able to supply. While in many instances detailed information is available regarding certain limited areas in the state, the same information needs to be collected on a more adequate scale from other parts of the state. This necessary additional information the College will set itself to acquire as rapidly as possible.

Outlook Report and Conferences

Having brought to bear upon the subject of farm adjustments facts of a more or less permanent character there then remains the

attempt to harmonize current facts concerning supplies, market trends, and prospects to production policies for a given period.

The Outlook Report for Illinois,¹ issued by the College in February each year for the past two years, appears to have been of material assistance in helping the individual farmer to anticipate the economic need for changes both in kind and quantity of his agricultural production. This report the College expects to continue to issue.

The value of the report, it is believed, could be greatly enhanced by a series of conferences held promptly following its publication, where farmers and College representatives could meet for discussion and where the report might be further explained. It is therefore planned to hold at least one conference in each of the eight farming-type areas as soon as possible after the National Outlook Conference in Washington (which meets in late January and in which the College participates); and it is believed that such regional conferences will play an important part in whatever attempts are made to formulate agricultural programs.

In addition to the conferences in the farming-type areas it is assumed that many if not most of the counties having farm advisers will desire to hold Outlook meetings, and perhaps the teachers of vocational agriculture will wish to arrange similar meetings in their respective communities.

Assistance That Can Be Rendered By Town Business Groups

Sincere interest in farming problems and a willingness to do something to help solve them have been shown in many instances by local chambers of commerce and individual bankers and their associations. There are many questions of interest both to the merchant and banker and to the farmer to which such organizations might well direct their efforts. Such questions as the following are suggestive:

1. What facilities are available for marketing farm products and for procuring and storing farm supplies, and what improvements in the organization and operation of such facilities are possible?
2. To what extent do prices paid farmers in local markets reflect differences in the quality of the products?
3. What establishments buy farm products on the basis of grades? What is the actual and probable potential demand by consumers and dealers

¹The Agricultural Outlook for Illinois, 1927, 1928.

for quality produce for which they are willing to pay appropriate premiums? For example, what buyers have attempted to handle quality eggs? What was the source of their supply? What has been the consumption of special quality milk, such as most families prefer for infants?

4. Under what conditions is it possible for local products to be handled for local consumption on a basis satisfactory to local producers, consumers, and dealers?

5. What effect have local city ordinances, established at the instance of boards of health, had in maintaining a favorable market for food products of high standard?

6. What are the factories and concentration plants, such as creameries, condensaries, canning factories, slaughter houses, packing plants, etc., that are using and shipping agricultural products? What is their capacity? What are their sources of supply? What are their outlets?

7. What are the sources and what are the total and seasonal amounts of farm products consumed in the communities?

8. What are the inducements to or the checks upon the direct marketing by producers of farm products to consumers? What are the license fees charged farmers for peddling? What other restrictions are there on direct marketing?

9. What wholesale or retail farmers' markets are there? What are the advantages and disadvantages from the standpoint of consumers?

No group should welcome more than should farmers the collection of such information on a comprehensive scale.

Present Steps Only a Beginning

With the assembling of existing data bearing on the subject of agricultural programs, with the information and plans that it is hoped will develop out of the discussion at the fall conferences, supplemented by additional inquiries and by the Outlook conferences in the late winter, it is believed that a real beginning can be made in formulating some practical, forward-looking agricultural programs for the various farming-type areas of Illinois. With the development of such regional programs, adaptations can be made that will fit the program into county units and into the peculiarities of individual farms.

The carrying out of the proposals here outlined will, I hope, help to start us in the right direction, so that whatever we may do agriculturally speaking will prepare us for the next step and guide us in the right direction. In this the College will need all the co-operation and support which farmers and their leaders and interested industrial groups can give it. While it is recognized that such a venture may not in the beginning be as successful as might be wished, it is believed that if it is pursued and persisted in until the right methods for accomplishing the needed adjustments are

found, the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois will have rendered to the farmers of Illinois a larger service than has yet been its privilege.

As an agricultural state Illinois has a size and significance that justifies the kind of intensive treatment herein indicated. Countries such as Denmark or Holland do not exceed in size some of these farming-type areas. Because Illinois happens to be one political unit is no reason why the agriculturally differentiated areas within its boundaries should not be as adequately treated as if the accidents of history had caused them to be separate nations or separate states. A movement such as outlined is imperative if we are to lay the right foundation for a better and more prosperous agriculture in Illinois.

